

THE OFFICE OF SERVICES TO THE AGING, AS LEAD AGENCY ON HB 5669, SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT OF THE BILL. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE IS BEING DRAFTED THAT WOULD ADDRESS THE CONCERN IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON ELDER ABUSE.

THE TASK FORCE RECOGNIZED THAT OLDER ADULTS ARE OFTEN IN POSITIONS WHERE THEY RELY ON ASSISTANCE FROM A FAMILY MEMBER OR A CLOSE FRIEND. WHEN ABUSE, PHYSICAL, MENTAL OR FINANCIAL, OCCURS, THE OLDER ADULT IS RELUCTANT TO SIGN A COMPLAINT. THIS SITUATION MIRRORS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. MICHIGAN CHANGED THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW SO THAT THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM IS NOT REQUIRED TO SIGN THE COMPLAINT. IT WAS THE TASK FORCE'S INTENTION THAT A BILL WOULD DO THE SAME FOR VULNERABLE ELDERLY. AS INTRODUCED, IT DOES NOT MEET THAT GOAL.

OSA IS INTERESTED IN SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE THAT REQUIRES A MAGISTRATE TO ACCEPT A COMPLAINT FROM A THIRD PARTY FOR ANY ALLEGED CRIME WHEN THE VICTIM IS A VULNERABLE ADULT. WE BELIEVE THIS WILL EXTEND A VIRTUAL "BLANKET OF PROTECTION" OVER VULNERABLE ADULTS OF ALL AGES, MAKING THEM A LESS ATTRACTIVE TARGET FOR ALL TYPES OF ABUSE, FRAUD, THEFT AND EXPLOITATION. IF A FAMILY MEMBER CAN SIGN THE COMPLAINT AGAINST THE "NICE MAN" WHO IS STEALING FROM A VULNERABLE ADULT, MICHIGAN WILL PUT PREDATORS ON NOTICE THAT THE ABILITY TO CHARM SOMEONE IS INSUFFICIENT AGAINST A COMPLAINT BEING FILED.

OSA THANKS THE MEMBERS OF THE STATE ELDER ABUSE STEERING COMMITTEE, SOME OF WHOM ARE HERE, FOR THEIR HELP ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THE SPONSOR AND THE COMMITTEE ON THIS BILL AND EXTENDING TRUE PROTECTIONS TO VULNERABLE ADULTS.